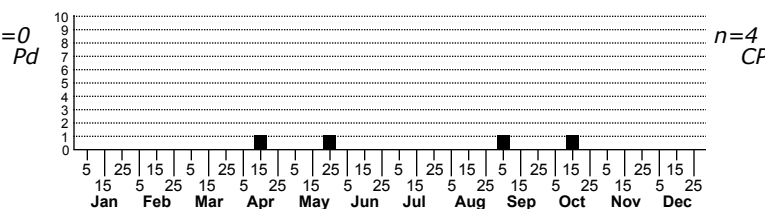
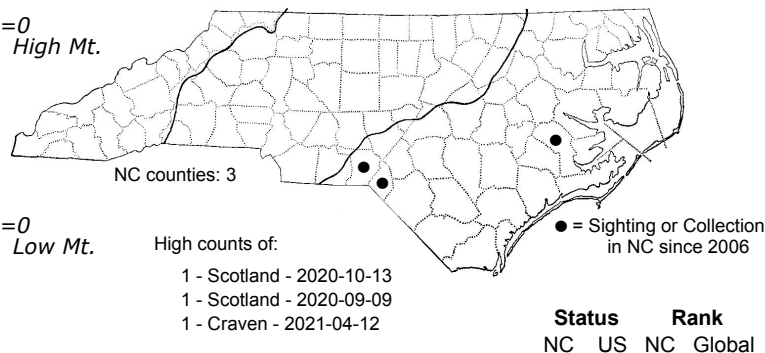


Dichomeris costarufuella None



FAMILY: Gelechiidae SUBFAMILY: Dichomerinae TRIBE:

TAXONOMIC_COMMENTS: *Dichomeris* is a large genus with several hundred species that occur throughout the world. Hodges (1986) recognized 74 species in North America north of Mexico, with 19 species groups. Most are leaf-tiers and they use a taxonomically diverse array of plant hosts, including members of 18 families of plants in North America. As of 2025, North Carolina has 35 documented species, and at least one undescribed species from the Sandhills.

FIELD GUIDE DESCRIPTIONS:

ONLINE PHOTOS:

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, ADULTS: Hodges (1986)

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION, IMMATURE STAGES:

ID COMMENTS: *Dichomeris costarufuella* is distinctive in having a mostly dark violet-gray forewing except for a brownish-orange to dull reddish-orange costal streak that runs from the wing base. The streak gradually narrows and terminates at varying distances from the base, but commonly near the middle of the wing. An isolated costal spot of the same color is present at around three-fourths the wing length. The forewing also has a set of blackish spots with white scale patches along the margins, including an antemedial spot, a pair of medial spots, and a postmedial spot. The dark spots are often masked by the overall ground color of the wing, but the white scale patches often stand out. The thorax, head and labial palps are more-or-less concolorous with the costal streak. The antenna is dark grayish-brown dorsally except for yellowish-orange on the first two or three segments of the shaft, while the legs are mostly dark-brown, with the last pair paler than the other two.

DISTRIBUTION: *Dichomeris costarufuella* has prairie and grassland affinities and is most common in an area extending from southern and central Alabama northward to northern Ohio and southern Ontario, and westward to southeastern Manitoba, southern Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, central Oklahoma and central Texas. Populations in North Carolina may be isolated from those farther south and west, with the nearest known record that we are aware of being from central Georgia. As of 2025, our only records are from the Sandhills and coastal areas of North Carolina.

FLIGHT COMMENT: The adults have been found from March through October, except in Texas where the flight season is longer. As of 2025, our very limited records are from mid-April through mid-October.

HABITAT: This species prefers open habitats such as prairies, infrequently mowed fields, open vineyards, and other areas that support *Rudbeckia* species. As of 2025, our records are mostly from Longleaf Pine stands in the Sandhills.

FOOD: The host plants are poorly documented, with the only reported host as of 2025 being an adult that was reared from a Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia* sp.; Hodges, 1986).

OBSERVATION_METHODS: The adults are attracted to lights.

NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RANKS: GNR SNR [S1S3]

STATE PROTECTION:

COMMENTS: